

**APPROVED MINUTES
YORK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Work Session

Subject: Draft Yorktown Historic District and Design Guidelines

York Hall, 301 Main Street

September 23, 2002

MEMBERS

Andrew A. Simasek

Spencer W. Semmes

Robert D. Heavner

Nicholas F. Barba

Alfred E. Ptaszniak, Jr.

Michael H. Hendricks

Ann F. White

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Michael Hendricks called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m. The roll was called and all members were present except Mr. Semmes. Staff members present were J. Mark Carter, Timothy C. Cross, Amy M. Parker, and Maggie Hedberg.

Mr. Hendricks named the members of the Yorktown Design Guidelines Study Committee: Andy Simasek, Chair; Rob Heavner and Ann White representing the Planning Commission; and Bryce Hollingsworth, Nancy Laurier and Mike Pierson, representing the Yorktown Village Landowner Group.

Mr. Simasek explained the process by which the committee produced the Draft Yorktown Historic District and Design Guidelines, during which it conducted 14 meetings and reviewed the previous draft guidelines page-by-page in great detail – some sections reviewed a number of times. Many revisions were considered and many sections redrafted. Finally, the entire document was reviewed again before it was accepted, finalized and prepared by staff, and presented to the Commission.

Mr. Mark Carter commended that the members, and particularly the citizen members who volunteered their time, for their shared desire to produce the best product that they could. He noted that the citizen members had very clearly stated that the position of the Landowner's Group was that there should be no guidelines but then they were willing to move forward under the premise that if there were going to be design guidelines for Yorktown, they wanted them to be the best. He believed the citizen-members of the Study Committee remained open-minded as they fulfilled their duties.

Mr. Carter indicated improvements were achieved over the initial draft produced by a consultant. The draft guidelines are considerably shorter and easier to understand. Two basic sub-areas instead of the original four further simplify the document, he added.

As explained by Mr. Carter, the document proposes the establishment of a five-member Historic Yorktown Design Committee to administer the guidelines and makes recommendations about its composition. Adoption of guidelines could lead to amendment of the YVA district to make more land uses matters of right and substitute one layer of review for another and get that review process into the hands of the citizens.

Mr. Carter invited Mr. Hollingsworth to address the Commission. Mr. Hollingsworth, former chair of the Yorktown Village Landowner Group, said that he and Mr. Chuck Murray, current chair of the group, had separately reviewed the final draft line-by-line and would like to suggest a few revisions at the appropriate time.

Mr. Simasek noted that the guidelines, if adopted, would allow more citizen input than is now required, allowing a future applicant to avoid hiring a builder or architect to interpret his proposal.

Mr. Ptasznik commented that the draft guidelines are excellent and reflect a lot of thought and work. He had spoken with two Yorktown residents – one a long-term resident and one a relative newcomer to the village – and they liked the proposed document because it will help maintain quality of growth and be easier to apply, and is less restrictive than, the original proposal.

Mr. Carter said his conversations with Mr. Murray had been constructive, and among the requests Mr. Murray made were that the proposed Historic Yorktown Design Committee should be structured to meet more frequently than monthly to increase convenience for residents and that an explanation be made to the citizens that the guidelines, if adopted, will apply to future development but will not be retroactive.

Mr. Hendricks asked if a photographic record exists of the present Yorktown and Mr. Carter replied that the consultant who produced the original draft guidelines had recorded the village in photos, which are now in the County's possession. He indicated that the original consultant also produced an informational brochure about the guidelines that could be adapted to the changes and would be available to citizens and one could be given to every landowner in the village.

Mr. Heavner inquired about how the deadlines for submitting applications to the Historic Yorktown Design Committee would be handled, and Mr. Carter indicated that the staff would set deadlines based on the notification requirements set out the proposed ordinance.

Mr. Ptasznik asked who would inform new Yorktown property owners of the guidelines. The consensus was that purchasers of homes or commercial property in the village should know from other residents, their realtor, attorney, architect or builder, or by inquiring of the County, but the staff cannot be responsible for seeking them out and informing them. The guidelines, if adopted, will become part of the County Code.

Mr. Murray stated that he has spoken with a number of Yorktown landowners; many still think the guidelines would be a bad thing. Mr. Carter said the Commission has discussed calling a public information meeting, which should be a good venue to reassure some of the citizens who remain skeptical and to remind them that a primary intent of the guidelines is to maintain the character of Yorktown as a historic place.

Mr. Hollingsworth mentioned that the main issue still to be determined is if there are going to be guidelines. The official position of the Yorktown Village Landowner Group is they do not want them, he said. He suggested that the Commission publish an official statement that the guidelines are considered necessary and the Commission will recommend their adoption to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Hollingsworth noted that the members of the study committee spent a considerable amount of time studying all of the issues and implications, and the resulting document is a vast improvement over what they started with. He applauded the staff and Planning Commission members for their contributions.

Mr. Hendricks suggested the Historic Yorktown Design Committee charter contain a clause requiring annual review of the guidelines.

Mr. Simasek noted that the County has made significant capital investments in Yorktown that are contingent on Yorktown remaining a historical district. This alone should necessitate some type of uniformity for future development or improvements.

Mr. Hollingsworth believed that waterfront development would have a positive effect on land values in Yorktown. The proposed document creates enough control to help preserve Yorktown's historic significance, he added.

Mr. Murray said there is a general belief among the landowners that the National Park Service will not be made to follow the guidelines; Mr. Carter said that the NPS is familiar with them and hopefully will make a commitment to following the principle of the guidelines. The County government will also be committed to following them.

The members of the Commission agreed to schedule an October public information meeting on the Draft Yorktown Historic District and Design Guidelines.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hendricks called adjournment at 7:45 PM.

SUBMITTED: /s/
Phyllis P. Liscum, Secretary

APPROVED: /s/
Michael H. Hendricks, Chair

DATE: November 13, 2002